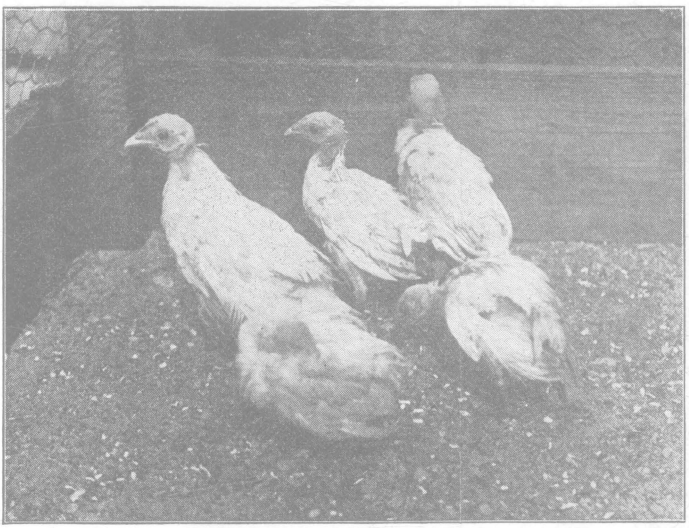
VOL. XVI, No. 8 BULLETIN 1920-21
OF THE
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE EXTENSION SERVICE
H. C. RAMSOWER, Director

SUMMER CARE OF CHICKS

By E. L. DAKAN
Department of Poultry Husbandry



Poor feed produces poor chicks. Stunted chicks like these never will develop into high producing pullets

FROM START TO FINISH

Most poultrymen and farmers know, that unless the baby chicks are given a good start, they will never develop into vigorous cockerels and high-producing pullets. In general, most people give their chicks a good start, then turn them out on range to rough it, and the result is a poor finish. It is just as important to keep the growing chicks in good health during the summer months as it is to start them right in the spring.

RANGE

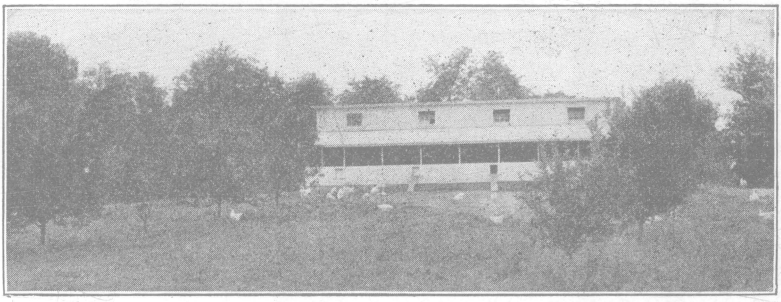
The range should be covered with a good growth of bluegrass, clover, or alfalfa. Where it is necessary to cultivate the range it should be divided into two lots, and oats or wheat grown in one lot and corn in the other. The best way to keep the range in good condition is to move the colony house at least

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, COLUMBUS, OHIO, COOPERATING WITH THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FREE—Cooperative Agricultural Extension Work—Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914.

every other year. The old chick yard should then be given a heavy application of lime and reseeded. Chicks respond to fresh soil in a way that is impossible to explain, and farmers who have been raising chicks on the same soil for years should move them this summer even if it means leaving the cement foundation and floor of the colony house behind. All colony brooder houses should be built with board floor on skids, so that the houses can be moved easily.

SHADE

Good shade thruout the growing season is essential. Growing plants, bushes, or low branching trees are best. If these natural shady plants are not on the range, artificial shelters should be constructed for protection from the sun. The colony house may be blocked up far enough off the ground to permit free circulation of air and a cool place for the chicks during the hot part of the day.



Plenty of shade and green feed are essential in the chick yards. Colony houses are recommended for brooding chicks. The house shown can not easily be moved

SUMMER HOUSING

Chicks that have been brooded in large numbers in a small house soon outgrow the house. This is especially true where the very small oil-heated hovers are used in small coops. The house should be large, roomy, and well-ventilated. The windows should be removed or opened during hot weather and an opening on the north should be provided. Chicks suffer as much from too much heat as from chilling.

The house should be kept clean thruout the growing season. Clean litter should be kept on the floor and the dirty litter and droppings hauled away from the poultry range. After each cleaning, the floor, walls, and all fixtures should be sprayed with a good coal-tar disinfectant. If red mites should get established in the house the coal-tar disinfectant should be applied, without being diluted, to the roosts and roost supports with a brush.

EARLY ROOSTING

Early roosting helps to prevent the chicks from crowding at night and becoming overheated or smothered. This trouble may not result in a high mortality, but is bound to check growth, and every means should be employed to prevent it. The roosts should be wide enough for the chicks to sit on rather than perch. Two- or four-inch boards are suitable for chick roosts. The roosts should be constructed in the back of the house, from 8 to 12 inches above the floor. It is advisable to place fine-mesh wire underneath, to keep the chicks from falling thru or from crowding on the floor under the roosts.

FEEDING

Feeding for best results is the biggest problem the poultryman has to solve, whether this be for growth or for egg production. The production depends not only upon proper feeding during the laying season, but also upon proper growth resulting from good feeding during the growing season.

Many farmers believe that chicks should be made to forage or "scratch" for a living from the time they are put on range in June until fall, when they are housed for the winter. They may get all the grain they can eat during this time, but unless more than grain is available they will mature late and be undersized, poor producers.

Professor J. G. Halpin of the University of Wisconsin has clearly shown as a result of experiments with growing chicks fed on limited rations that where only corn, wheat, or oats are fed the chicks will not develop normally. These feeds, of course, are valuable in the ration, but where the chick is fed only on grains it will not grow. When the grain feeds were supplemented with milk and green feed, however, the chicks grew normally and developed into healthy, vigorous stock.

These experiments prove that an abundance of green feed should be supplied to growing chicks, and milk should be available at all times. The infertile eggs from incubators are a valuable food as long as they last, but it is not necessary or economical to feed fresh eggs, since milk supplies the same food elements and is cheaper.

Alfalfa, clover, bluegrass, rape, wheat, oats, and barley make the best crops for green feed on range. It is not necessary to feed whole milk, since skimmilk and buttermilk contain enough butterfat to supply the chicks. Skimmilk is plentiful on most farms, and the cheapest source of supply. Buttermilk is just as good if available. Where neither of the above is available the semi-solid buttermilk should be purchased. This product is now available from several sources in Ohio. It is fed by adding from 5 to 7 parts of water and given to the chicks as a drink. Milk powders are not as good as any of the above forms, and should be used only when semi-solid is not available.

The question is often asked: "Is sour milk better than sweet?" In answering this question it can be said that the chicks will consume more sour milk than sweet. The lactic acid in sour milk aids digestion and sour milk is more digestible than sweet. It is impossible to feed the sweet milk and keep it from souring during hot weather or in a warm colony house, and it is not advisable to feed the product first sweet and then sour.

A GOOD GROWING RATION

Scratch	*Mash*
200 lbs. cracked corn	200 lbs. bran
100 lbs. oats or wheat	100 lbs. middlings
	100 lbs. cornmeal
	100 lbs. ground oats
	75 lbs. meat scraps
	5 lbs. bone meal

If milk is available at all times the meat scraps may be reduced.

If this dry mash mixture is kept before the chicks thruout the growing season and milk is given daily the poultryman may be sure that he has not limited his production because of improper feeding. The scratch mixture

should be fed lightly in the morning and all that will be cleaned up at night. Equal amounts of mash and scratch feed should be consumed.

SEPARATE THE SEXES

The males should be removed from the pullets' range when 8 weeks old. The pullets are the money crop and should be given every advantage. They should not be forced to compete with the males. The cockerels for breeding purposes should be selected at about this time and may remain with the pullets thruout the summer. The early developing, short-legged, deep-bodied cockerels are the best breeders. The surplus should be disposed of as broilers. A good fattening ration for the broilers is:

7 lbs. cornmeal
3 lbs. middlings
1 lb. bran

To this mixture add sour milk till the wet mash will pour. Start feeding lightly and increase to two full feeds a day. No other feed or drink is necessary. The birds should be confined to a coop or small pen to prevent exercise. By this method, ½ pound can be added to the weight of the birds in about 8 days. This may mean getting them on the market earlier and receiving a much higher price per pound.

WHAT CHICKS SHOULD WEIGH AT DIFFERENT AGES

	Cockerels	*Pullets*
White Rocks:	At 7 weeks, 1 pound	At 8 weeks, 1 pound
	10 " 2 "	12 " 2 "
	13 " 3 "	15 " 3 "
	15 " 4 "	19 " 4 "
	18 " 5 "	23 " 5 "
	20 " 6 "	
	24 " 7 "	
R. I. Reds	At 8 " 1 "	At 9 " 1 "
	12 " 2 "	14 " 2 "
	15 " 3 "	19 " 3 "
	19 " 4 "	25 " 4 "
	23 " 5 "	
	25 " 6 "	
White Leghorns:	At 8 " 1 "	At 9 " 1 "
	12 " 2 "	15 " 2 "
	14 " 2½ "	20 " 2½ "
	17 " 3 "	25 " 3 "
	20 " 3½ "	
	23 " 4 "	

CONCLUSIONS

1. A shady range with an abundance of green grass, clover, or alfalfa is essential for growing well-developed chicks.
2. The house should be well-ventilated during hot weather.
3. Sour milk is indispensable.
4. Dry mash should be supplied at all times.
5. The cockerels for breeders should be selected when they weigh about 2 pounds.